The Representation of The Iranian Online News Coverage on The Iraqi Parliamentary Election 2021: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

In this thesis, the researcher surveys the linguistic strategies that disclose the ideology, bias and power relatives in conveying some news reports regarding the Iranian newspaper "Tehran Times" online news coverage on the Iraqi parliamentary election 2021within the perspective of critical discourse analysis and how this newspaper, which is transcribed by non-native speakers, uses different linguistic strategies to satisfy the readers with its ideology.So as to attain the purposes of the study, three questions are presented by the researcher in this study: 1 -What linguistic strategies does Iranian newspaper "Tehran Times" utilize in representing the Iraqi parliamentary election 2021? 2- How does the language of the Iranian newspaper disclose the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran? 3- To what extent the Iranian newspaper "Tehran Times" "is biased, impartial or objective in representing the news on the Iraqi parliamentary election that occurred in 10th of October, 2021?The researcher utilizes van Dijk's (2002) model of ideological square to analyze the data and van Dijk (1991) to analyze theme.The results of this study show that the most common linguistic techniques employed in "Tehran Times" reports differ noticeably from one another.This newspaper has its own opinions and philosophies that might represent its own beliefs and its policies while addressing such matters as the Iraqi parliamentary election.It is clear from discussing the outcomes that "Tehran Times" is impartial in representing the Iraqi parliamentary election 2021.

Keywords: report, election, ideology, media, bias, objectivity

1.Introduction

The Iraqi parliamentary election 2021 is considered a very significant event in the modern history of Iraq, because this election has caused many changes in the course of the Iraqi political life.This election has drawn the attention of the media of the whole world in particular and the attention of the Islamic Republic of Iran.Media of this country play a very important role in covering the news about such significant event.Different means are utilized to manipulate the truth for no other purpose than to convince the readers with a particular political or social point of view.In most cases, media are considered biased and also try to fulfil and satisfy the interests of their politicians.Through the use of different linguistic strategies, this manipulation and bias can be realised to create a positive or negative image in the mind of the readers about the event or the main actors in this event.Furthermore, the representation of most news reports has ideological dimensions that follow and mirror the beliefs and the policy of the country, where this news is published.

The present study tries to answer the following questions:
a.   1.What are the linguistic strategies that are utilized through the news discourse in

representing the Iraqi parliamentary election 2021?
2.   2.How does the language of the Iranian newspaper disclose the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran?
3.   3.To what extent the Iranian newspaper "Tehran Times" is biased, impartial or objective in representing the news on the Iraqi parliamentary election that occurred in 10th of October 2021?

1.2 Aims of the Study
The study aims at:

1.   1.Finding out and explaining the linguistic strategies that are utilized through the news discourse to convince the readers easily by the socio-political ideology of the publisher and the owner of the Iranian newspaper in representing the Iraqi parliamentary election 2021.
2.   2.Revealing how the language of the Iranian newspaper discloses the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
3.   3.Explaining to what extent the Iranian newspaper "Tehran Times" newspaper is biased, impartial or objective in representing the news on the Iraqi parliamentary election that occurred in 10th of October 2021.

2.Literature Review

2.1 Election
Ahmar (2005) defines election as "exercise through which the voters express their choice between competing political parties or candidates; mechanism for choosing representatives and governments" (p.26).In the same respect, Katz and Warshel (2011) denote that "Elections are particularly important for social science analysis because they are repetitive events that have gone on for a long time" (p.114).

2.2 Bias
Bias can be realised when someone attempts to give his own judgment about an event when he / she uses an unreliable source, when he / she attempts to give his / her opinion but basing this opinion on his / her one-sided personal assessment of this event.

For Steinbock (1978) bias is "a disproportionate weight in favor of or against an idea or thing, usually in a way that is close- minded, prejudicial, or unfair.Biases can be innate or learned.People may develop biases for or against an individual, a group, or a belief" (p.247).

2.3 Objectivity
Ayodele (1988) defines objectivity as a judgment which depended on obvious and observable phenomena and this judgment is mostly uninfluenced by personal partialities and slanting (p.106).In the same way, Hartley (2002) comments that "media objectivity is not about 'reality' or 'truth', so much as it is about trust between addresser and addressee" (p.167).In this vein, Richardson (2008) further proclaims that the broad use of the term *objectivity*, especially in the journalistic tradition, is often equated with language that is free of subjective opinions and that this gives an implication of a cline in which subjective and non-subjective (objective) meanings are on opposite ends (p.156).

2.5 Critical Discourse Analysis
Wodak and Meyer (2009) indicate that critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA)

emerged as a group of academics in the 1990s in Amsterdam where a meeting was held in January 1991.Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, Theo van Leeuwen, Gunther Kress, and Ruth Wodak spent two days together with the help of the University of Amsterdam and had the amazing chance to discuss ideas and methods of Discourse Analysis (henceforth DA), specifically CDA.The meeting allowed participants to confront one other is extremely different and distinct views, while they have altered greatly since 1991, remain important in many ways.Differences and similarities in terms of different theories and approaches in DA were laid out during the group building process.The debut of Van Dijk's magazine Discourse and Society (1990), as well as several books published at the same time and with comparable study goals, marked the beginning of the CDA network.(PP.3-4).

2.6 Basic Assumptions of CDA

Van Dijk (2003) points out that there is a numeral of basic requirements so that CDA efficiently realizes its goals (pp.352-371):

• It is issue or problem-oriented: Any methodological or theoretical method is useful as extended as it can effectively research significant societal issues including sexism, racism, and other types of inequality that have social structures.

• CDA isn't a subject, a school or a sub-field of DA; it's an openly critical method, perspective, or posture to studying text and speech.CDA focuses on (group) power, inequality and dominance as well as how they are perpetuated or contested by members of social groups through talk and text.

• Too much of CDA's work focuses on the underlying ideas that contribute to a form of reproduction or opposition to inequality and dominance.

2.8 Basic Notions of CDA

2.8.1 Ideology

Althusser (1971) represents that the concept of ideology can provide the receiver with the distinction between this concept and that of Marx's (if occurs) in a sum of records as the following (pp.123-173):

A.   "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence".Althusser confirms ideology does not reproduce reality but rather embodies the erroneous identification of individuals with reality.
B.   "Ideology has material".This seems to be related to the reasons that ideologies are often a social activity.
C.   The fundamental goal including all ideologies seems to be to convert humans into subject areas.It forms our reality and performs for us as 'obvious' or 'true'.

2.8.2 Power

Wrong (1979) refers to that power is defined as the ability of certain people to affect others (p.2). In this respect, van Dijk (1996) indicates that (pp.84-85):

1.   Power is a connection between organisations and social groups.
2.   Social power is characterised by the control which is practised by a particular group over the actions and the minds of another group.In this way, the first group (the

powerful) will limit the freedom of (the weak) and influence their behaviours (pp.84-85).

2.9 Van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Approach

Van Dijk's framework is threefold: discourse, cognition and society.Thus, van Dijk (1998) introduces a novel and unique multidisciplinary framework of ideology that connects between social cognition and societal structures.In this framework, he defines ideologies as "the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group".This type of ideology helps members of a group to arrange their social views about the organization's standards and act appropriately (p.8).In this respect, van Dijk (1998) considers ideology as a band of ideas in people's mind such as the ideas of feminism or sexism.These ideas stand for certain beliefs about what is right or wrong, what is good or bad and so on.Both ideas and beliefs are personal as well as social.They are socially acquired, constructed, and changed through interaction with other groups, discourse production and communication (p.9).Van Dijk (2002) also invokes that the ideology variants of essential context models are commonly encountered in discourses at the levels of meaning (semantics) form or structure (rhetoric), argumentation, style, and interaction.He mentions that ideologies are frequently seen in speech polarization, which reflects competing group categorisations into in-groups and out-groups, as represented by the pronoun pairs us and them.Debate tactics, as listed below, are frequently used in ideological discourse.(pp.43-75)
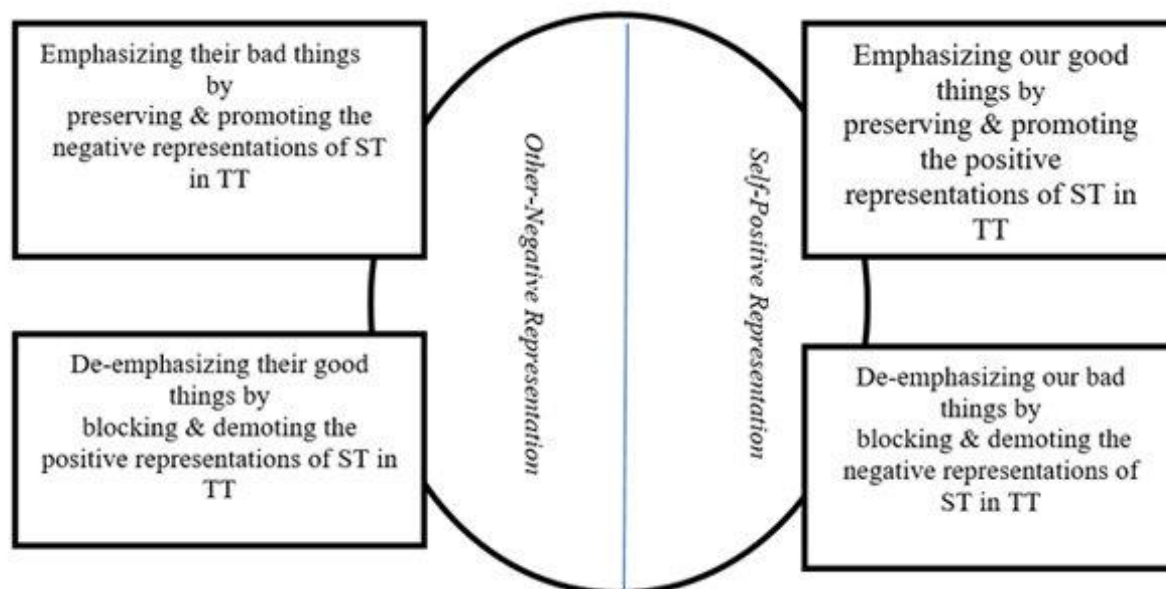
These four possibilities are:
- "Emphasize Our good things"
- "Emphasize Their bad things"
- "De-emphasize Our bad things"
- "De-emphasize their good things"

Van Dijk (2005) states that "this four of possibilities form a conceptual square, which may be called the ideological square"."It may be applied to the analysis of all levels of discourse structures"."As to their content, they may apply to semantic and lexical analysis, but the use of the opposing pairs 'emphasizes' and 'deemphasize' allows for many forms of structural variation" (p.44).Furthermore, van Dijk (2005) explains that the most mutual discursive strategies within his own framework that can be found in news discourse are explained and listed below: (pp.734-736)
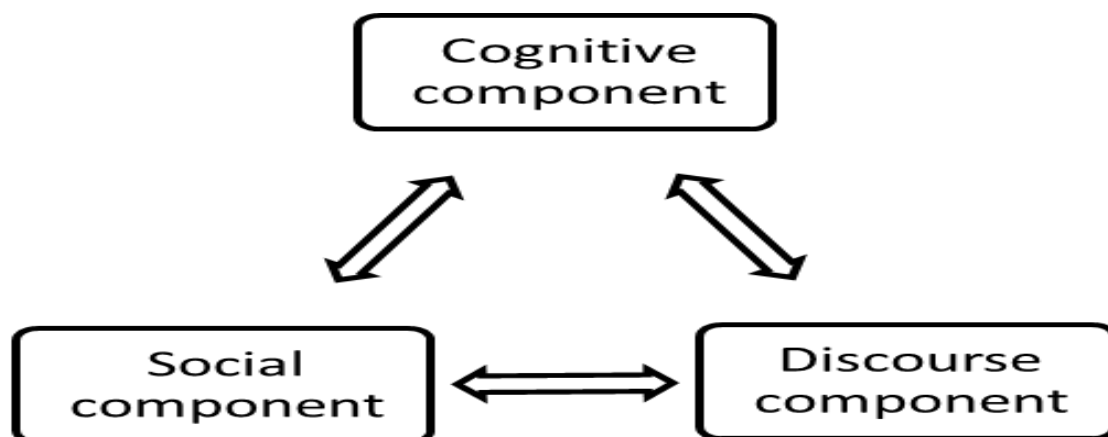
1) *Consensus*: This can be a political tactic that is utilized when a province is endangered by means of out-groups and requires national unity and cross-party.
2) *Hyperbole*: An implement is used for improving meaning, whether for good self-presentation or negative and bad other presentation.
3) *Distancing*: A socio-cognitive trick that can be used, for example, instead of naming or characterizing others, by using demonstrative pronouns.
4) *History as a lesson*: As a positive self-presentation or negative other-presentation method, a situation is sometimes associated to positive or negative historical occurrences.
5) *Illegality*: This device is used when out-group members are labeled as criminals or lawbreakers using this device.
6) *Vagueness*: Writers /speakers may possibly employ ambiguous expressions such as: "few", "a lot", "very", "thing", "low", and "high" so as not to provide enough data to

the listeners/ readers either as a negative other-presentation or a positive self-presentation.

7) *Metaphor:* It's a rhetorical device in which the writer utilizes a literal sentence to illustrate or indicate to something else that has a similar goal but differs in the direct meaning of the lines, such as "time is money", which demonstrates that the time moral tale relates to money.

8) *Counterfactual:* It is the author's approach for expressing the argument by implying a future hypothesis.It is accomplished by utilizing the term "if" as the argument medium, as in "this world does not exist if I return immediately." If the writer does not take the action, it will take place in the future.

9) *Victimization:* This method is used to portray a negative image of countries that are highly tied to polarization in order to draw attention to their undesirable features, such as "politicians speak too much without acting." It demonstrates that the author is attempting to portray the country's unfavorable image by citing politicians who merely talk but accomplish nothing.

10) *Number game:* The author employs this approach to emphasize and persuade the argument of the people by using numbers and statistics, such as "seventy-five people were murdered last night as a result of the earthquake."

11) *Prediction:* This strategy refers to the intention of speakers to describe social actors negatively and positively.Metaphorical expressions are used in describing people.

12) *Irony:* This strategy refers to the use of expressions to express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning.

13) *Distancing*: A socio-cognitive trick that can be used, for example, instead of naming or characterizing others, by using demonstrative pronouns.

14) Contrast: This strategy is used to make a comparison between two expressions to analyze the meaning.

The figure below shows the four possibilities of the ideological square

Figure (1): *The four possibilities of the ideological square*

Figure (2): *Van Dijk's (2015) Socio-Cognitive Approach (p.15)*

In his approach, van Dijk (2008) adds to that the goal of CDA is to conceptually bridge the 'gap' between macro and micro approaches, as both levels of analysis are required.Micro-level analysis includes concepts like language usage, verbal engagement, discourse, and communication, whereas macro-level analysis includes concepts like power and dominance (p.87).Hart (2010) denotes that "Van Dijk uses social memory to refer to semantic memory given the contrast between the socially shared nature of semantic memory and the idiosyncratic nature of episodic memory.Social cognitions are socially shared mental structures and representations.Although embodied in the minds of individuals, social cognitions are social because they are shared and presupposed by group members" (p.16).Likewise, van Dijk (2015) confirms that the third component and angle in this triangle is the discourse (p.70).The figure below shows the interrelated relationship between the triangle's angles.

3.Methodology

The purpose of this section is to present and introduce the system used for data analysis on one side, and to present the media, its relation to news bias, propaganda and language on the other side.The genre of the data, the concepts utilized in data selection, and the data analysis method are all discussed in this part.Clarifying the analytical framework for analyzing news stories, especially van Dijk's (2002) model of ideological square.The focus of this research is on the major influences of news discourse on people, as well as how the ideology of news might be delivered subtly or blatantly (in an open and unashamed manner).The CDA method is not limited to documented analysis; rather, it goes beyond the external level of the genre to reveal the values, interests and ideologies of the spoken or written texts to reveal in what manner the owners of the binary nominated newspapers, that is the Iranian newspaper "Tehran Times" try to convey its interests and ideologies through election coverage.In addition, one of the goals of this research is to determine whether the coverage of these election news is biased or objective.In order to achieve the aim of the current study, qualitative analysis is utilized and supported by some statistical details.

3.1 Analytical Framework

As an analytical framework, the researcher takes van Dijk's (2002) model of ideological square The researcher chose this model for some reasons: Van Dijk's (2002) model of model of ideological square is closely, this context is constructed on an *ideological square* that gives a practical and general tactic of ideological analysis, in sodition as a result is used to the analysis of ideological discourse at the whole standards of discourse.

3.1.1 Macro-proposition (Theme)

According to van Dijk (1988b), theme can be thought of as the text's essence or summary, and it can be found by reading the whole document in addition to the title because it enumerates the text's main points (p.52).Van Dijk (1991) points out the significance of the major issue or theme in the analysis of a news report.Themes can reveal a variety of psychological and social aspects of the news.Significant and pertinent topics are always emphasized and discussed first, followed by a discussion of the topic's specifics and objectives (pp.71-72).In the current study the researcher will conclude and analyze some themes from the news reports e.g., the theme of democracy, human rights, poverty..etc.

4.Analysis

Along with the objectives of study is to investigate and analyze the data of six selected news reports from "Tehran Times" newspaper. The analysis includes two levels according to the adapted model, namely: micro and macro levels.Finally, the results of the analysis of these articles are presented.

4.1 Micro-level Analysis

4.1.1 Van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Model (Discursive Strategies)

Example (1): *"Wide-scale demonstrations in October and November 2019 against alleged corruption led to the resignation of the government of Adil Abdul Mehdi."* (**The 1st report**).By employing the expression "Wide-scale" the reporter uses "hyperbole" as a discursive strategy, the reporter uses this discursive strategy as a semantic rhetorical device that works and delivers a positive self-presentation.The reporter employs ambiguity as a rhetorical technique by using the term "alleged".The reporter attempts to cover such a horrible thing as "corruption," which is widespread throughout the country (Iraq).The reporter also tries to downplay a negative aspect of the administration by using the term alleged.The lexicalization is presented here in this text through utilizing the term "corruption" that is embedded in the government.The reporter makes an attempt to be objective.

Example (2): *"The third point to the electoral reforms is that there are more constituencies in every city, which depends on the population of each town and province.Baghdad, Mosul, and Basrah … a much lower number than previous elections."* The reporter keeps on emphasizing the positive procedures done by the government giving the strategy of positive self-presentation about in-group.

Example (3): *"Previously if a candidate received the most votes in a specific area, it would not necessarily mean they would gain a parliamentary seat."* By utilizing the word "if" to portray the dispute by indicating the future hypothesis, the writer uses counterfactual as another discursive technique.The reporter also introduces the adverb "Previously" as a discursive strategy to compare this election to previous ones in terms of the new system in the Iraqi parliamentary election in 2021.The reporter tries to paint a favorable picture of the new "electoral legislation" and underline its benefits.The reporter makes an effort to remain objective and unbiased.

Example (4): "*Another factor that may play a significant role in the election is a recent statement issued by Iraq's higher religious authority, Ayatollah Sayyad Ali Sistani, who called for a high turnout."* The reporter tries to highlight the vital role of the religious authority represented by "*Ayatollah Sayyad Ali Sistani"* and describes this authority as in- group by this positive representation. The reporter tries to be objective and unbiased.

Example (5): "*For example, the very large tribe of al-Suad is the ruling monarchy in Saudi Arabia.In Iraq, there are also large tribes, and while they do not rule the country … to vote for the same person.*" The reporter depicts two contrasting images: the first shows Iraqi tribes as in-group members, while the second displays Suad tribes (al Saud) as out-group members.The reporter here seeks to depict Iraqi tribes as non-fanatical, and they can alter their minds from election to election.The reporter presents the Iraqi tribes in a positive macro semantic light.The reporter makes an effort to be objective and impartial.

Example (6): "*There are 21 alliances running and more than 3200 candidates contending … for 329 seats, including 83 seats representing 25 percent of …distributed among Christians, Shabaks, Sabeans, Yazidis, and Faili Kurds.*" **(The 2nd report)**.The reporter employs the number game as a discursive method, employing numbers (21 / 3200 / 8/ 329/ 83 /25) rather than written forms to grab the reader's attention and eyes.The reporter hopes to improve the credibility and dependability of his story by employing the discursive approach *number game*.The reporter highlights and presents a positive image of the government and its procedures by pointing to the Iraqi government's distribution of seats among Iraqi people, which included eighty-three seats for women and nine for Iraqi minorities.The reporter is not prejudiced.The reporter employs *consensus* as another discursive approach to emphasize the country's unity (Iraq), and this voting system will give minorities the best chance in the legislative elections.The reporter makes an effort to be objective and neutral.

Example (7): "*Iraq's political system is set up … Prime Minister is a Shia, the President a Kurd, and the Parliament speaker a Sunni.A system that experts say was set up by … its invasion in 2003… revising.*" It is obvious that the ideology of illegality is shown by stating "its invasion in 2003," emphasizing that the system of government in Iraq is established by Bremer, who is appointed by the US occupation authority in Iraq in 2003.The reporter paints a negative picture of the American invasion of Iraq, describing it as illegal, and disregards the Iraqi government system established by the US occupation authority.The reporter calls the politicians by their sects through using the lexical choices "Shia, Sunni, Kurd" .The reporter appears unbiased and impartial.

Example (8): "*One of the reasons that have been cited for the low turnout is the new electronic voting system so, extending the voting hours until late at night would have likely seen a higher turnout.*" Through utilizing the word "low", the reporter employs *vagueness* as a discursive strategy in order to avoid providing detailed and precise information regarding Iraqi participation in the parliamentary election.Because most voters stay at home to avoid the heat in the afternoon, extending polling hours until later in the evening almost certainly increased voter turnout.The reporter presents Iraqi voters as in-group members and provides a pleasant picture of them.When the reporter uses the number (6) rather than written as a rhetorical technique to catch the reader's interest and eyes, he performs another discursive strategy known as number game.Furthermore, the reporter wishes to increase the confidence in the integrity of the report's discourse.No doubts, the reporter makes an effort to be objective and impartial.

Example (9): "*The bad news for the U.S.is that the new will not change more than 5 percent.*" The *prediction* is obviously presented as an ideological technique in this case, and it is very clear in the sentence "the new will not change," therefore the reporter expects the Iraqi election turnout rate to actually change very little.In the above-mentioned text, a number game strategy is used to grab the reader's interest and eyes, which can be shown in the number (5) instead of the written form as a rhetorical device.The lexical use of "bad news" is employed within the text, which the reporter expresses his own viewpoint about the event that was

received by the U.S administration.The reporter makes an effort to be objective and impartial.

Example (10): "*The election, held on Sunday, was the main task of the provisional government of Mustafa al-Kadhimi, protests over corruption and lack of basic services.*" **(The 4th report).**The discursive technique *history as a lesson* is performed in this text through the use of the phrase "last year" to draw a contrast between the two Iraqi PMs and to build a positive picture of the new Iraqi PM, "Mustafa al-Kadhimi," as an in-group member.Again, the terms like "corruption, lack of basic services" are utilized to expose the negative sense assigned to the former politicians.The reporter uses the word "Sunday" to add credibility to the report and attempts to be neutral and unbiased.

Example (11): "*Some pundits and media outlets, especially those affiliated with Saudi Arabia, sought to portray ... with Iraq are beyond the political fortunes of Iraqi political factions.*" When the reporter depicts the results of the Iraqi parliamentary election in 2021 as "a blow to Iran's power in Iraq," he employs *irony* as a discursive method.Ironically, Iraq and Iran have a very solid relationship.To avoid generalization, the reporter uses the word "some" and creates a negative picture of "pundits and media outlets, especially those affiliated with Saudi Arabia," describing them as an out-group.Another ideological strategy is shown in this example, which is *hyperbole* employed in "Iran's relations with Iraq are beyond the political fortunes of Iraqi political factions" as a semantic rhetorical device that works and presents a good self-presentation.As a result, the reporter attempts to portray "Iraqi political groupings" as good and in-group.Objectivity and impartiality are obvious in this example.

Example (12): "*Sadr himself proved skilled at political maneuvers.He used to be the kingmaker without exposing ... to shield himself from public anger arising from possible inadequacies.*" With the sentence "The nationalist cleric understands that he needs other factions to shield him from public anger arising from possible inadequacies," the reporter emphasizes that al-Sadr has achieved success in his political schemes, and he recognizes that he needs other groups to protect him "from public anger arising from possible inadequacies." The reporter draws a positive picture of al-Sadr, describing him as a member of the group.When describing al-Sadr as "the kingmaker" and giving a positive self-presentation, the reporter employs *metaphor* as another discursive method by introducing the expression "the kingmaker" as a rhetorical strategy.The reporter shows a willingness to be objective and impartial.

Example (13): "*The leader of the conquest (Fatah) party, the outgoing parliament's second-largest alliance, Hadi al-Ameri, rejected the "The conquest's leader's remarks were echoed by other party leaders.*" **(The 5th report).**The reporter used *victimization* as a discursive tool to highlight the Al-Fateh Alliance's poor image in the Iraqi legislative election.The reporter attempts to draw readers' attention to the chairman of Al-Fateh Alliance's comments regarding the results of the Iraqi parliamentary election in 2021.As a rhetorical device to make the report's discourse more credible, the reporter uses the quotation "we will not accept..our candidates and voters will full force." By utilizing the demonstrative pronoun "we" instead of naming or characterizing individuals, the reporter adopts another discursive strategy *distancing*.The reporter describes the "conquest party" as in-group.The reporter attempts to be skewed.

Example (14): "*The state of the law coalition leader and former Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki, also rejected the results despite his party gaining more seats than the previous election.*" When the reporter highlights, "The state of the law coalition leader" also refuses the results of the forthcoming Iraqi parliamentary election in 2021, despite receiving more than thirty seats, he employs *contrast* as a rhetorical device.The reporter attempts to portray this

coalition in a positive light, describing it as in-group.

Example (15): "The party that won the most seats, the Sadr party itself, has called for the withdrawal of U.S.troops which is viewed as a city within a city conspiring the large scale of the diplomatic mission." Emphasizing the number (2500) rather than the written form is to show a number game ideology to capture the public's attention and focus.As a result, the reporter represents "Al-Sadr party" as in-group, while portraying "US forces" as out-group.The reporter takes the opportunity to be objective and neutral.

4.2 Macro-level Analysis of "Tehran Times" Reports

Some examples are illustrated in this level of analysis based on the above-mentioned analytical model.

4.2.1 Major Discourse Topics as "Theme and Ideology" negative lexicalization

Example (16): "The demonstrations in 2019 wanted reforms among a host of other demands.At the top of 40.2 million, 60 percent of whom are under the age of 25." (**The 2nd report**).At the beginning, the reporter employs the theme of democracy and human rights, which allow people to ask for reforms like bringing the election six months before.The theme of poverty is shown in this statement.Poverty is realized by depriving Iraqi people from their basic needs like what is mentioned in the paragraph.Many of Iraqi people are under pressure of poverty because there is no employment or job opportunities for youth.

Example (17): "This time Iraqi expats living outside the country will not be allowed to vote." In the above example, suppression, lacking of human rights and violation of freedom for voting is mentioned in the new Iraqi election law.The reporter employs the theme of immigration, that immigrants are introduced as people suffering from the new policies updated by Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission that they are prevented from voting in the Iraqi parliamentary election in 2021.

Example (18): "Despite having started with legitimate demands, the movement split and turned violent, with protesters attacking positions belonging to the country's armed forces." *(The 3rd report).* Despite the fact that the protesters look for their rights and general reforms that should be spread all over the country but it can be realized that these demonstrations have turned to use violence against the Iraqi forces.The theme of violence is illustrative in the above-mentioned example.

Example (19): "Some pundits and media outlets, especially those affiliated with Saudi Arabia, sought to portray the results ... political fortunes of Iraqi political factions." In the above-mentioned example, the reporter tries to discuss and expose the theme of election through exploring the Saudi's media, which portray the election in Iraq as shock or misfortune for Iran.This depiction is considered as a black image and violation that should not be on honest media.

Example (20): "That means the end of American military forces on Iraqi soil, an end to American warplanes flying over the skies of Iraq without prior permission of Baghdad." *(The 5th report).* The whole text politically has the themes of persecution and violation that represent the unpermitted airways flying over Iraq.

Example (21): "A Day earlier, *the leader of the Fatah party, Hadi al-Ameri, rejected the results and warned." "We ... and voters will full force.*" (**The 6th report.**) In this example, the political discrimination is obvious, which reflects the reaction of Al-Fatah party and other

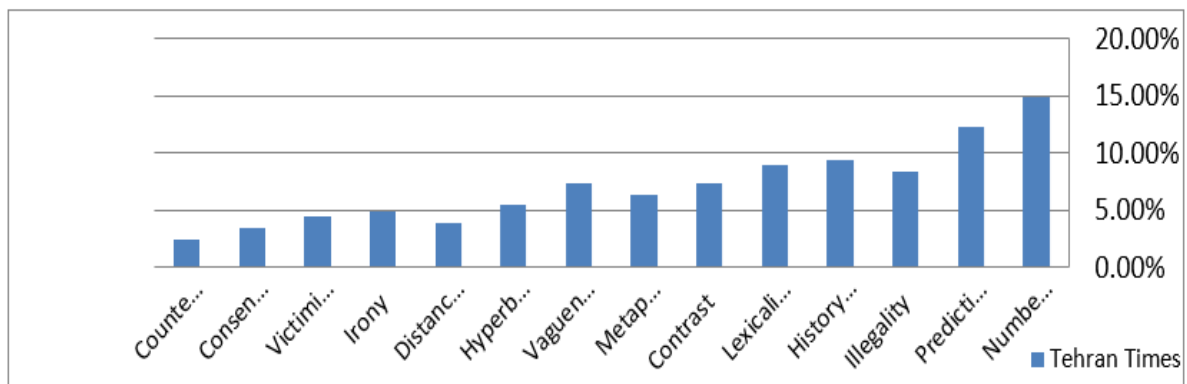parties that lost half of their parliament seats in the 2021 election.

4.3 Van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Model (Discursive Strategies)

The micro-level analysis of the frequencies and percentages of the discursive strategies for the Iranian reports.

Table (3): *The Frequencies and Percentages of Discursive Strategies in Tehran Times*

Discursive strategies	Tehran Times	
	Frequency	**Percentage**
Number Game	30	14.85 %
Prediction	25	12.37%
Illegality	17	8.47 %
History as a Lesson	19	9.40%
Lexicalization	18	8.91%
Contrast	15	7.42%
Metaphor	13	6.43%
Vagueness	15	7.42%
Hyperbole	11	5.44%
Distancing	08	3.96%
Irony	10	4.95%
Victimization	09	4.45%
Consensus	7	3.46%
Counterfactual	5	2.47%
Total	202	100%

Below figure more clearly illustrates Tehran Times reports

Figure 3: *Discursive Strategies in Tehran Times*

Tehran Times reports make use of the discursive strategies 202 times out of which number game occurred 30 times (14.85%) followed by prediction 25 times (12.37%), history as a lesson 19 times (9.40%), lexicalization 18 times (8.91%), illegality 17 times (8.47 %), contrast 15 times (7.42%), vagueness 15 times (7.42%), metaphor 13 times (6.43%), hyperbole 11 times (5.44%), irony 10 times (4.95%), victimization 9 times (4.45%), distancing 8 times (3.96%), consensus 7 times (3.46%), and counterfactual 5 (2.47 %) respectively.The application of numbers or statistics by discourse makers in argument to increase the authority and sincerity of their /opinions/beliefs or ideas is called "number game." Much argument is adapted to enhancing credibility by moves that give emphasis to objectivity.According to van Dijk (2004: p.79), they symbolize the "facts" against mere opinion and impression.The frequency of the discursive device "number game" in Tehran Times utilizes it 30 times.So, the discourse makers rhetorically employ or mention statistics or numbers in their speeches for purposes to increase the authority of their beliefs.Lexicalization occurs 18 times in Tehran's reports.Employing more usage of "lexicalization" in the political reports is a reference for usage of different style of lexical choices, the reporters frequently use "lexicalization" to depict their particular beliefs into the mind of the audiences regarding the 2021 election.Thus, democracy is viewed in its media discourse when the media outlets and reporters aim to represent their allies and partners positively and to present others negatively through "lexicalization".Speakers may use vague expressions that do not have well-defined referents,

or which refer to an ambiguous set.Tehran Times usage of the vagueness strategy; 15.The following utterances are examples of employing "vagueness" in the third report: "One of the reasons that have been cited for the low turnout is the new electronic voting system".In one of Tehran Times reports, the reporter employs vagueness through utilizing the word "low" to avoid providing detailed and precise information regarding Iraqi participation in the parliamentary election.Iranian reports utilize "victimization" strategy with 9 times.It is organized through demonstrating the out-group negatively and representing the in-group as the victims to the bad and unbalanced reports.Obviously, Iranian reports introduce the Iraqi people as a victim to unpleasant results of corruption.In addition, these reports present Iran and PMF as a victim to the shocking media attacks.However, Tehran Times employs "victimization" so as to attract the feelings and reduce others hard attitudes towards it and expose the party that causes damage to people.

4.3.1 The Results of Macro Level "Theme and Ideology"

Tehran Times reports show the moderate situation towards the Iraqi people in general, which the Iranian reports depict PMF as a positive force that represents all Iraqi people not only Shia Islam.Theme of persecution in Tehran Times reports maintains the severe oppressive atmosphere of some Iraqi politicians' treatment with the Iraqi people before the 2021 election.Democracy, human rights, election, suppression and poverty are shown in Iranian reports.Tehran Times reports appear to pay much attention to basic problems such democracy, human rights and election related mostly to the 2021 election and its relevant issues.Immigration is the lowest one, which is recognized in Tehran Times reports.Tehran Times illustrates that Saudi Arabia, U.S and other countries are out-group, and they have no right to intervene in the private and internal affairs of Iraq especially in the last election.

5.Conclusions

All the questions are answered by pinpointing different linguistic strategies associated with the Iraqi parliamentary election 2021.There are only fourteen linguistic strategies found in this newspaper namely, number game, prediction, illegality, history as a Lesson, lexicalization, contrast, metaphor, vagueness, hyperbole, distancing, irony, victimization, consensus and counterfactual.The macro-topics are shown to explain the ideology of this newspaper.Only eight major topics are identified from the selected data.The identified macro-topics namely are discrimination, persecution, democracy, human rights, election, suppression, poverty and immigration.Thus, the study is able to recognize the ideology through the eight macro-topics embedded in Tehran Times reports and identifying the in-group and out-group.This newspaper is impartial towards this event.

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Website Links of the selected Reports

Tehran Times

https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/465824/Millions-of-Iraqis-heading-to-the-polls-early

https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/465852/Who-ran-in-Iraq-s-crucial-election

https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/465902/What-does-a-low-Iraqi-vote-turnout-mean

https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/465951/Will-Sadr-cooperate-with-other-Iraqi-political-factions

https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/465962/Iraqi-parties-reject-scam-election
https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/465984/Iraq-election-marred-by-lack-of-transparency